

In the Description

Please amend the paragraph that bridges pages 4 and 5, as follows.

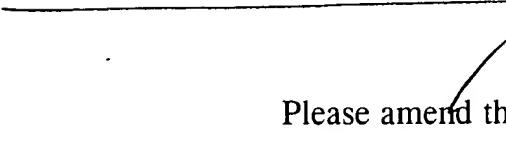
In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a two-step process is used to purchase and redeem ~~an EPI~~ a redemption document, for example, a ticket, representing an EPI. In the first step of the process, referred to herein as the “purchasing step,” a digital certificate stored on a smart card is used to facilitate the encoding of a key printed as a readable indicia (e.g., a bar code) on ~~a ticket~~ the redemption document prior to its printing. Credit card information or other purchasing information is transmitted and verified (but not stored) as part of this first step.

Please amend the paragraph that appears on page 5, lines 3 to 9, as follows.

In the second step of the process, referred to herein as the “validation step,” when the purchaser completes the transaction, for example, attends the an event for which ~~the~~ a ticket is issued, the redemption document (the ticket) is presented by the purchaser for validation. The same digital certificate from the smart card must be used to validate the encrypted information on the printed ticket redemption document before entry into the event, so that only the person holding the smart card used for the purchasing step can use the printed redemption document (the ticket) to redeem the EPI (for admission to the event in this example). Once validated, the purchase is considered complete.

Please amend the paragraph that appears on page 5, lines 10 to 17, as follows 

In accordance with a first embodiment, the present invention comprises a method of correlating a purchaser of an electronically-purchased item ("EPI") with the EPI, the EPI to be subsequently received or "consumed" by the purchaser or the purchaser's designee, comprising: a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate information is transferred to a seller of the EPI; and a verification step, wherein the purchaser and a redemption document representing the EPI are correlated by requiring the purchaser or the purchasers designee to provide the purchaser-related digital certificate information before receiving/consuming the EPI and by electronically comparing the purchaser-related digital certificate information with the redemption document representing the EPI.

Please amend the paragraph that appears on page 6, lines 3 to 5, as follows.

In a most preferred embodiment, the EPI comprises events represented by redemption tickets or other redeemable documents (e.g., a ticket), the electronically-readable indicia comprises bar-coding markings on the EPI each redemption document, and the purchaser-related digital certificate information is provided via a smart card.